

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 758

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2848

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS

SUBJECT: EXTRADITION BILL REFORM

1. PRESIDENT BL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ALFONSO CARRO INFORMED EMBOFFS JULY 4 THAT HE DOES NOT REPEAT NOT EXPECT TO SEE THE EXTRADITION REFORM BILL CURRENTLY ON THE ASSEMBLY AGENDA DEBATED OR PASSED. CARRO STATED CANDIDLY THAT THERE IS LITTLE GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN VOTING THE BILL THROUGH. AT SAME TIME HE AGREED THAT IF GOVERNMENT WERE TO DISPLACE SUCH INTEREST, BILL COULD BE PASSED DESPITE THOSE FEW DEPUTIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE OPPOSITION, WHO HAVE PERSONAL FINANCIAL INTERESTS AT STAKE WITH VESCO.

2. CARRO OBSERVED THAT CURRENT REPORT OF THE MAJORITY TO REFORM THE PRESENT LAW WOULD IN FINAL ANALYSIS PRODUCE A PRODUCT ONLY MARGINALLY BETTER THAN CURRENT LEGISLATION. THE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT ADDED THAT WAY TO HANDLE THIS LAW WOULD BE TO APPROVE A TOTAL REPEAL (E.E. THE MINORITY BILL), BUT REITERATED THAT THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION.

3. IN CONTRAST, OPPOSITION PNI DEPUTY PIZA, WHO INTRODUCED MINORITY BILL, TOLD EMBOFF JULY 7 HE IS MODERATELY HOPEFUL OF DEBATE AND PASSAGE OF THIS BILL

"BY SEPTEMBER." MOVING THE BILL UPWARD FROM ITS CURRENT
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SIXTEENTH POSITION ON ASSEMBLY AGENDA TO SIXTH WILL DEPEND

UPON GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR AN OMNIBUS BILL TO COVER A GOOD CHUNK OF PENDING LEGISLATION WHICH IS AHEAD OF THE OPPOSITION'S EXTRADITION REFORM EFFORT. (EMBASSY RECALLS, HOWEVER, THAT OPPOSITION EFFORTS LAST YEAR ALONG GENERALLY SIMILAR LINES FAILED IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE ASSEMBLY.)

4. COMMENT: CARRO'S APPROVAL OF CHANCES FOR DEBATE AND PASSAGE OF EXTRADITION REFORM IS MOST FORTHRIGHT AND AUTHORITATIVE THAT EMBASSY HAS YET ENCOUNTERED. IT ALSO MAKES SENSE IN LIGHT OF "CONFUSION" REGARDING PURPOSE OF UMANA VISIT. THE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT IS A LOYAL PLN WORKHORSE WHO IS HIGHLY RESPECTED BY HIS COLLEAGUES, AND HE IS HONEST. THE FACT THAT HE SQUARELY PLACES THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE STALL IN MOVING AN EXTRADITION REFORM BILL IN THE ASSEMBLY ON THE ODUBER GOVERNMENT IS SOBERING, AND IT GIVES CAUSE FOR CONSIDERABLE PAUSE AS WE PREPARE FOR THE NEXT GO-AROUND WITH THE GOCR.

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